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ABSTRACT

A study investigated patterns of English loan words in various domains of journalistic discourse in Thai print media, to gain insight into economic, political, and social relationships of the languages and the role of English as a global language. Thai was chosen because Thailand was not subject to colonialism by Europeans and because some research already exists. Texts examined were two magazines each in business and politics and two general-interest magazines, all aimed at adults and published in August-September 1986. Analysis found that in 182 articles, 626 separate lexical items from English occurred, with the highest proportion in the business publications and lowest in the political magazines. These differences are attributed to the varying amounts and kinds of advertising and the nature of language use within each area of interest. Phonological changes and variants, as reflected in Sanskrit orthography, and combined Thai-English words and borrowing of discrete English morphological segments were also noted. It is concluded that English has had a significant impact on Thai in a range of semantic areas, attributable in part to the specialized fields in which English-speakers enter Thai culture. It is also suggested that English has permeated Thai culture and language to a deeper level than have the specialists who imported English into Thailand. (MSE)

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ENGLISH BORROWING IN THAI AS REFLECTED IN THAI JOURNALISTIC TEXTS

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1 Introduction
2 Questions and Implications
3 Methodology
4 Analysis of borrowing in Thai
5 Conclusions

1 Introduction

This study looks at patterns of occurrence of English loan words in various domains of journalistic discourse in Thai print media. By examining domains of Thai discourse where borrowing from English occurs, as well as patterns of nativization for borrowed items, we can gain insight into the economic, political, and social situations which hold between the two languages. This, in turn, will have implications not only for the study of the mechanisms at work in a language contact situation, but also for the study of English in its situation as a global prestige language.

Like previous prestige languages, English rose to its position during a period of colonialism and the expansion of imperialist powers. Studies such as Kachru's (1983) *Indianization of English* (also Kachru 1982, Platt and Weber 1984, and others) have concentrated on the further development of English in former colonies, including Indian, Singaporean, and Malaysian English. However, the social

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setting which historically caused English to assume its position in these countries, and globally, has changed. Today's imperialism is predominantly economic rather than overtly militaristic. Although the subject of language borrowing has been well studied, and the social settings of prestige languages have been examined in detail, a look at the phenomenon of language contact between English and the language of a developing nation which is not a former colony of a western nation may help to identify those conditions which contribute to the continued use and future spread or decline of English as a language for international communication. Questions on these matters are of obvious concern to those in the business of teaching English to speakers of other languages, to language planners, and to educators in third world countries. As Masavisut et al. pointed out in "The power of English in Thai Advertising," a study of the use of English in a particular register of Thai, "Today English is needed for survival....cultural invasion of the more affluent countries on the less developed countries (is to be seen in the language of advertising)" (Masavisut 1987:3).

These issues are important whether English is viewed as simply a language for wider communication and international commerce, or an instrument of cultural invasion and a new imperialism.

2 Questions and implications

The Thai language was selected for this preliminary study for two reasons. First, as Thailand wasn't colonized by European nations, English and other western languages were not imposed on the country. Historically, these languages have been used in Thailand as a matter of economic expediency, if not outright necessity. In fact, since the time of Chulalongkorn, Thailand's rulers have considered

knowledge of European languages and their associated cultures, by members of the ruling class, to be a necessity if Thailand was to avoid the fate of colonization which befell its neighbors. The case of contact between Thai and English, therefore, is different from the cases in south Asia and Africa because English was not imposed by an outside colonial power as part of the machinery of colonial government, but was, in a sense, imported, although not entirely as a matter of free choice.

The second reason for choosing the Thai language is that linguists in Thailand already raise questions on the status of English in their country. Warie, as early as 1978, comments that the study of language attitudes in Thailand has implications for linguistic theory as well as education. She discusses the development of a 'new register' of Thai, English-mixed rather than Indic-mixed. And she hypothesizes that more detailed examination of data from specialized fields would show particular patterns of usage of anglicized Thai.

Kanittanan (1979) and Chutisilp (1984) also comment on the use of English as an additional language in Thailand, and on the sociolinguistic implications of this. Kanittanan focuses on how English influences the speech of Thais living in Bangkok, while Chutisilp looks in the other direction toward the influence of Thai as L_1 on English spoken by Thais.

More recently, and more to the point at hand, Masavisut et al. have studied the use of English in Thai advertising with the intention of demonstrating the impact of western society, and the use of the English language, on Thai culture:

> In the advertising scene where printed materials, radio, and television are powerful media for transmitting commercial values into the public's mind the power of the English language has become inevitable and irritable. It is quite difficult to predict when the trend will be changed. The way things look now, it seems that the trend will perpetuate forever. No one can deny the fact that advanced technology is innovated and transferred to Thailand by western countries. Though Japan is one of the leading nations in technological advancement, Japanese products are still marketed with English brand names, English product features, and English generic product categories. As long as these products, their claims, their slogans, their supports, and their features are to be advertised, the power of the English language through media penetration will be felt. (p. 25)

Though it may be difficult to tell *when* the trend will be reversed, it is not difficult, given the nature of prestige languages, to tell *what* would reverse the trend. English could be replaced by another language of technology, or of imperialism. The fact that groups of people, like individuals, can often be convinced of their superiority or inferiority to other groups has upheld the phenomenon of relative social prestige of languages as a constant feature of human society. Given this, and the sociolinguistic history of Thailand, the interesting questions for this study become, not those related to English in Thailand, but rather those related to English in Thai.

Masavisut et al. have claimed that the use of English in Thai advertisements has the effect of making the ads more persuasive. English may be used in nearly all areas of an ad. Brand names may appear in Thai, as do descriptions of product claims which are said, by advertising copywriters quoted in the study, to "sound more credible and prestigious

when translated into English." (p. 2) Product features are often named in English "to give them a 'high tech' sound," and in fact the features themselves are often borrowed from western technology, as are entire products, which in turn leads to the borrowing of product names and so on.

The increased effectiveness of the ads which include English in them can be said, therefore, to result from an attitude in the minds of Thai consumers that associates English with high tech or modern concepts and products. In the ads described in Masavisut's study, English is sometimes transliterated into Thai script; at other times the Roman alphabet is used. It would appear that the appearance of English on a label is a strong enough appeal to this attitude in the consumer to influence a decision to buy, whether the language is understood or not. Obviously some consumers will understand the language and others will not. In some ads, particularly those aimed at the youth market, it seems likely that the advertisers don't expect the consumer to fully understand the English in the ad. On occasion, product claims in Thai advertisements appear in a mixture of Thai and English. Such claims usually involve English idioms or metaphorical expressions which may pose special translation problems. In any case, while the occurrence of English words in advertising texts provides insight into language attitudes, it is somewhat more difficult to arrive at generalizations about the actual use of English, and English loan words, by the Thai consumers who read the ads. In order to do this, information about the language behavior of Thai consumers must be obtained.

3 Methodology

Because of the strength of the claims made in papers such as Masavisut's and the others discussed above, and because it has been adequately shown that written discourse

is a worthwhile source of data for linguistic study, the data discussed in this paper has been taken from Thai journalistic texts. Since the language of such pieces of discourse is intended to be read and, presumably, understood by a wide audience, it's safe to assume that an author writing for a magazine would use language familiar to his audience. Therefore, data gathered from these sources should provide clues to the behavior of members of the speech community of magazine readers rather than the linguistic competency of a single speaker, such as an advertising copywriter. Furthermore, in the case of this study, the use of a body of texts will make it possible to collect a relatively large body of data easily, while limiting the data to particular domains of language use.

The texts examined come from a different functional domain than the advertising just discussed. They are informative, without the purpose of selling. Since the assumption has been made that a textual study could give an indication of the linguistic competence or behavior of members of a community, texts were chosen to provide data from a variety of discourse domains in order to allow comparison of possible differences in behavior or competence. Since the study is preliminary, to test these basic assumptions a limited number of magazines were selected as sources of texts for analysis: two each in the areas of politics and business, and two more general coffee-table type magazines.

In general, the magazines are aimed at an educated audience of adult readers. Most contain some of the same ads discussed in Masavisut et al, or ads for similar products. All six are readily available on newstands in Thailand and are widely read.

The newest (in its second issue at the time of this study) of the two business magazines, *Marketing* or การตลาด *gantalat* has the name of the publication in both English and Thai on its logo. Its more established competitor คู่แข่ง *khuukhang* 'competitors', is somewhat more conservative in its design and editorial approach. *Marketing* also has a bureau in the United States. An emphasis on consumer goods and the latest trends, in both advertising and editorial content, gives the impression that the publication is aimed at a younger, upwardly mobile group of readers that would probably have been referred to, in the US, as 'yuppies'. Both of these are read by businesspeople and members of the general reading public who are interested in business news. *Competitors* tends to feature more in-depth analysis in its stories and has a greater emphasis on news than *Marketing*. The latter places more emphasis on the advertising field and analysis of new products and advertising campaigns. As such, it is more specialized than *Competitors*, which appeals more to a 'lay' audience. A statement of purpose in the opening pages of *Marketing* indicates its commitment to the advertising profession.

Of the six magazines selected as sources of data, these two business publications had the largest concentration of English words.

In the domain of politics the two publications selected were มติชน *matichon* 'people's opinion', and สยามรัฐ *siam rart* 'Siam state'. Like the business magazine *Competitors*, *Siam State* is aimed at the older, and more conservative reader. Its content is strictly political news and editorials. Readers of *People's Opinion* are less conservative and also expect more from their magazine than political discussions. *People's Opinion* contains fiction and poetry (albeit politically oriented) and entertainment, arts,

religious, and sports features. The language of *Siam State* and *People's Opinion* showed two distinct registers of Thai. One, a heavily Sanscritized version of Thai, showed up in editorials, or articles critical of the government. The other, more common register, used more English loan words and few words of obviously Sanskrit origin. The use of the Sanskritized register in Thailand is normally indicative of a formal, serious tone and gives the impression to native speakers of Thai that the speaker is a very educated individual identified with traditional and conservative attitudes.

The remaining two magazines, selected because of their appeal to general readers, are ดิฉัน *diichan*, a first person singular feminine pronoun, 'I' and ลลนา *lalanaa* 'young woman'. The titles suggest that the magazines are aimed at women, and in fact some of the content, such as articles on fashion and decorating, are written for female readers. Most of the buyers of both of these publications are female; however, content of general interest tends to insure that the magazines are read by men as well. Both magazines also contain articles reprinted from other sources.

All six of the publications examined were published during August or September of 1986. Data was collected from each issue with the help of a language consultant[1] and filed in a computerized data base in order to facilitate preliminary analysis for this study, as well as to allow the possible application of statistical methods to a larger corpus of data at a later time. Such a study should include a more detailed analysis of the ratio of borrowed English

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[1]I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Namtip Pingkarawat who unselfishly gave her time in assisting with the collection of data for this study.

words to 'native' Thai words and also allow for a more careful definition of the Sanskritized register.

In the analysis, all words of possible English origin were noted, as well as the frequency of occurrence of particular items. All the editorial content of each magazine was examined. Advertising was ignored for the purposes of this study.

4 Analysis of borrowing in Thai

In the 182 magazine articles examined, which ranged in length from a fraction of a page to 14 pages, 626 separate lexical items were found to have been borrowed from English. Although no data is available to show what percentage of the total vocabulary used in these articles this figure may represent, the number of items found does not seem insignificant. The more interesting questions for this study concern the domains where borrowing is occurring, and the patterns of nativization, which will indicate the depth to which English language and culture have penetrated into Thai. Table 1 shows the distribution of borrowed lexical items in each of the three domains represented by the six magazines.

Table 1

Magazine	# articles	# articles with no Eng.	# borrowed items
general:			
I (220 pp.)	44	1	197
Young Woman (150 pp.)	39	4	137
political:			
People's Opinion (50 pp.)	32	8	50
Siam State (44 pp.)	29	7	45
business:			
Competitors (196 pp.)	27	0	262
Marketing (46 pp.)	12	1	90

To make a preliminary comparison of the relative amounts of borrowing from English between discourse domains, a constant ratio of English to Thai lexical items is assumed to hold within each publication. This allows a comparison to be made on the basis of the average number of borrowed words to appear in each text.[2] Table 2 shows the average number of English borrowings per article in each of the publications.

Table 2

I	4.4
Young Woman	3.5
People's Opinion	1.56
Siam State	1.5
Competitors	9.7
Marketing	7.5

[2]As noted above, for a more accurate statistical study a word count would be necessary. In the case of this study, with the purpose of making testable hypotheses regarding the amount of English borrowing in various domains and registers of Thai, this "quick and dirty" method will allow at least a reasonable estimate to be made.

The table shows a wide range of disparity in the amount of lexical items borrowed from English that are used in each domain. The texts taken from the political publications are the most conservative in terms of the amount of anglicization taking place. This is in keeping with the attitudes associated with the Sanscritized formal register often found in these publications.

Nor is it surprising that the texts representing the domain of business and advertising would show the largest concentration of English items, since, as noted above, English has become the international language of these fields, and is supported as a prestige language by factors of trade and commerce.

The numerical scale representing the degree of borrowing ranges from 1.53, the median number of borrowings per text in the political domain, to 8.6, the median number for advertising. The number of borrowed English lexical items per text in the general domain, represented by *I* and *Young Woman* is slightly below 5.65, the center of this scale.

No firm conclusion can be drawn from this comparison but some hypotheses are suggested.

The use of a traditional Sanskritized register, that associated with the Thai literary tradition and the educated upper classes, apparently identifies the more conservative speakers in the domain of political discourse. This avoidance of an anglicized register, and the linguistic nationalism supported by the language policies of the Thai government, apparently discourage borrowing from English in this domain.

Borrowed items from the sample in this domain include:

anglophone	bank	buffer	cable T.V.
communist	concert	discredit	exhibition
genes	physicist	pump-gas (gas station)	
seminar	superstar	underground	technique
zipper			

Obviously not all of the borrowed words are directly related to politics or political ideas. Some of these also show up in other sample texts as well.

The high frequency of borrowing from English found at the opposite end of the scale can be explained by the nature of advertising and other business-related fields. Heavy borrowing occurs in two main areas of the domain: the first related to consumer goods, the second to business jargon itself. Masavisut et al. have pointed out the reasons for the importation of products and product names or features. In this area we find words such as:

album	sound track	beer	boutique
caffeine	ceramic	control	fashion show
guarantee	king-size	mood	spray
tape	taste	word processing software	

These kinds of items also achieve widespread use in other domains. Jargon words related to business, however, are less widespread outside of business texts:

account	agent	agency	art director
big boss	billing	bus back	campaign
consumer research		corporate image	D-Day
creative director		direct marketing	export
hard sale	layout	market share	professional
reactive	reactive	showroom	supplier
p.o.p. (point of purchase)			

A large number of people working in business, particularly advertising, are bilingual speakers of Thai and English. (In *Marketing* most of the advertisements for jobs are in English.) This serves as an area of language contact where many of Thai's borrowed English lexical items first enter the language.

A look at the data from *I* and *Young Woman* shows that borrowing takes place in almost any semantic domain:

antique	black	bonus	capsule
chalk	character	cheer	clearing
counter	crystal	escort	flat
idea	joke	latitude	major
masterpiece	mobile unit	OK	sculpture
seafood	serve	tall	wealth

In studies of foreign borrowing, questions of nativization become important. Two kinds of nativization are relevant to this study. One involves the sound of words, the other the meaning.

Phonological changes occur because native speakers of the matrix language fit borrowed words into the phonological system of their language. Semantic shift or expansion is a linguistic, and cultural, phenomenon. Except in the cases when a newly-borrowed word coincides with a borrowed concept, the newly-borrowed expression must be adapted to fit in with the important concepts and behavioral patterns of the culture of the matrix language. Therefore linguistic borrowing involves changes, either unconscious or conscious, in language-related behavior patterns of bilinguals. These borrowed patterns are then passed on to the rest of the population. In the case of borrowed lexical items, this second step, the transfer to other speakers, is the point in

the process when nativization is most likely to occur, when the most radical phonological changes or semantic shifts take place.

The Thai orthography is designed to show the original spelling and pronunciation of words borrowed from Sanskrit. The same conventions and special characters that allow this are often used in transliterating English. Although research on the phonological aspects of borrowing is not possible in an analysis of written discourse, this feature of the Thai script is useful in discovering how English words become nativized in Thai. For example, the sound /r/ doesn't occur in word-final position in Thai. The spelling for the Thai word for 'beer', which comes from English, is เบียร์, pronounced /biya/. The character 'ร' appears in the Thai form because it approximates the English 'r'. The marker above the character indicates that it is unpronounced. The word for 'bill', pronounced /bin/ in Thai, is spelled with the character 'ล', which normally represents an /l/ sound, except when it has the value of /n/ word finally. The Thai spelling for the word is บิลล์. The consonant cluster at the end of the word is not a possible combination in Thai, yet the original spelling of the English word is retained with the use of the 'unpronounced' marker.[3]

Another interesting example is found in the English word 'brand loyalty'. The pronunciation in Thai could be either /brænloyaati/ or /brænroyaati/. In some dialects of Bangkok Thai, there is convergence going on between the /l/ and /r/ sounds and hypercorrection on the part of speakers seeking to maintain the pronunciation of the status dialect often results in the substitution of /r/ in words that originally

[3]This also indicates that the word was not necessarily borrowed from spoken language since the long consonant at the end of the word would not be an important distinction in spoken English or Thai.

contained /l/. In the case of 'brand loyalty' the word has been spelled to indicate the /r/ sound instead of the /l/.

Other examples in the data show indications that they were completely nativized in spoken Thai before being written. เอ็น *en* 'entrance exam' is one of the most obvious, เด็ร็น *dun* 'modern' is another. Occasionally two borrowed forms exist simultaneously, one apparently more nativized than the other, as in the case of 'zip' and 'zipper', which both refer to the fastener.

Semantic shifts occur in a number of examples. A sample includes the verb 'lobby', which has been extended in meaning beyond the idea of lobbying politicians. The example in the data was used to refer to the activity of seeking to build good public relations and good relations with the press. 'Partner' is used to refer, not to one's business associates, but rather to a kind of prostitute working in bars. 'Pump gas' is no longer a verb phrase but instead acts as a noun meaning 'gas station'.

An interesting innovation is the collocation โนเก *no ke* 'not OK'.

The data also included a number of borrowed English lexical items which have combined with native Thai words. It's not uncommon to attach a Thai particle meaning 'person' or 'tool' to an English verb like 'ski' to create the Thai equivalent of 'skier' or 'ski equipment'. Other possible combinations include Thai nouns with English modifiers, and vice versa, or noun-verb combinations as in *mii*-date, 'to have a date'.

One of the most unusual borrowed forms to turn up in the data is the English affix *-s*. According to Thai native

speakers, the affix can be placed on Thai adjectives to intensify them, the explanation being that the meaning of the form in English is something like 'to make many'. This gives the affix the same semantic function as the native Thai intensifier มาก *maak*, meaning 'much' or 'many', which can also be applied to a variety of syntactic elements.

5 Conclusions

Indications from the data in the areas of language use and nativization processes are that English is having significant impact on Thai in a broad range of semantic domains. The use of English by bilinguals working in specialized fields, particularly those related to business and marketing, and the attitude toward the English language and associated products, (as reflected in the studies of Thai advertising discussed above) lead to the more widespread borrowing of English lexical items and the associated culture.

The use of English loan words, and the degree to which they have been nativized, especially in the more generally-oriented publications, also show that English has permeated more deeply into Thai culture and society than the level of the specialized bilinguals who initially introduce many of the loan words.

The domains in which borrowing has occurred suggest social, economic, and political motivations for this trend, as well as the operation of a kind of linguistic imperialism. Language-exporting countries are those which create a need for their language by being a source of consumer products, technology, 'innovation', and sometimes 'aid'. The result of all this is that countries like Thailand are literally buying into western culture. This is the mechanism which maintains the status of English as a global prestige language.

This work also shows that the study of written Thai discourse is a practical and useful strategy for studying language contact in this case. A more detailed, statistically-oriented study of written Thai discourse would have implications not only for the theory of language contact but also applications in language teaching and planning in Thailand.

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